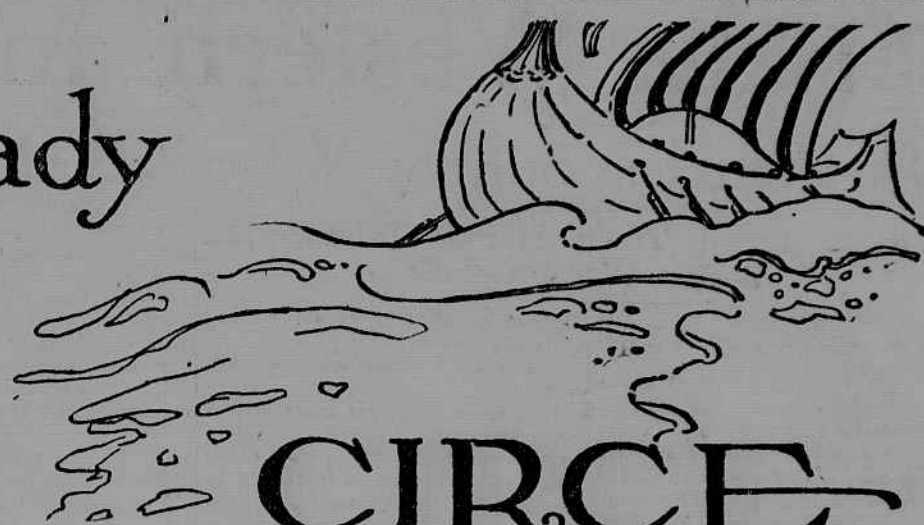
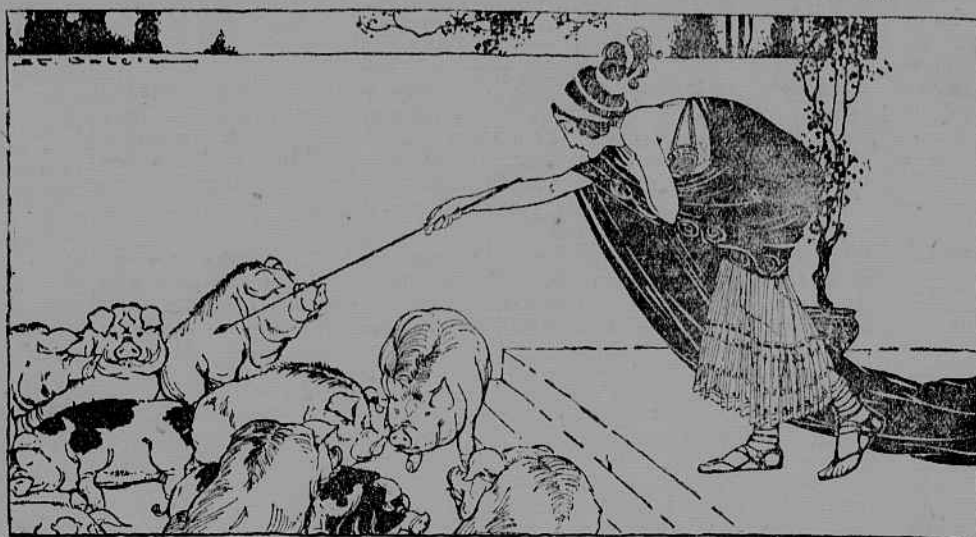


# The Tell-Me-A-Story-Lady



## CIRCE

As the sorceress touched them with her magic wand they were turned into swine

That evening they had a fine banquet and Odysseus told all that he had seen.

In the morning he divided his men into two companies. Odysseus himself was captain of one company and Eurylochus of the other. Then the captains drew lots to see which company should journey into the island and see who lived in the house from which came the smoke. The lot fell to Eurylochus and his men.

As they drew near to the house, they saw lions and wolves and other animals whom Circe had bewitched by her magic. The men were frightened at first, but the animals were friendly to them and stood on their hind legs like friendly dogs.

The enchantress could be heard singing inside the house, and the men caught flashes of brightness as she wove at a wonderful loom. They called out to her at last. Coming to the door Circe welcomed them and invited them inside.

Only Eurylochus feared a trick and he stayed outside.

Circe led the men in and made them sit down on chairs and couches. She then had a rich meal served to them. She herself prepared a drink for them of wine and honey, and

in trying to reload his rifle. He carried other cartridges in the right-hand trousers pocket, but he was not able to reach them. His right arm was useless, and the fingers of his left, lacerated by the mugger's bite, refused to take hold.

He had, however, three of the five shells the rifle held still in his gun.

The rifle lay half under him, its stock protruding from beneath his body. With the elbow of his left arm he was able to work it out.

But at that moment the hope of preserving his life broke like a bubble in the sunlight. He could not lift the gun to swing and aim it at a shape in the darkness. With his mutilated hands he could not cock the strong-springed hammer. And if he could do both these things with his fumbling, bleeding, lacerated fingers, his right hand could not be made to pull the trigger. Warwick Sahib knew at last just where he stood.

Two things remained, however, that he might do. One was to call and continue to call as long as life lasted in his body. More than once in the history of India a tiger had been kept at a distance, at least for a short period of time, by shouts alone. In that interlude, perhaps help might come from the village. The second thing was almost as impossible as raising and firing the rifle, but by the luck of the gods he might achieve it. He wanted to find

into this she poured deadly drugs. Presently, after each man in the company had had a taste of this drink, she struck them with her magic wand. Each and every man in the company was changed into a bristled, grunting hog. Only they kept the minds of men and so were that much sadder for their plight. Then Circe drove them out to a pigsty.

Eurylochus waited and waited for his companions. At last, when he saw the pigs driven out at the door, he knew that they must be the men. With sorrow he returned to Odysseus and told what had happened.

When the story was told Odysseus said that he would have to go and rescue his followers. Eurylochus pleaded with him not to go, but the leader would not listen to him.

As Odysseus drew near to the house of Circe he met a young man carrying a golden wand. This was Hermes, the messenger of the gods.

"Where are you going, unhappy man?" asked Hermes. "Do you not know that your men have been changed into swine by Circe? She will treat you the same way unless I deliver you from this peril."

"Take this magic herb with you," continued the messenger of the gods, "it will protect you

Singhai's knife and hold it compressed in his palm.

He knew rather too much of the way of tigers. They do not always kill swiftly. It is the tiger way to tease, long moments, with half-bared talons; to let the prey crawl away a few feet for the rapture of leaping at it again; to fondle with an exquisite cruelty for moments that seem endless to its prey. A knife, on the other hand, kills quickly. Warwick much preferred the latter death.

Even as he called, again and again, he began to feel about in the grass with his lacerated hand for the hilt of the knife. Nahara was stealing toward him through the shadows.

But Warwick shouted; and the sound for an instant appalled her. She lurked in the shadows. And then, as she made a false step, Warwick heard her for the first time.

AGAIN she crept forward, to pause when Warwick raised his voice the second time. Every few seconds he called again. In the intervals between, the tiger crept forward. Her excitement grew upon her. She crouched lower. Her sinewy tail had whipped softly at first; now it was lashing almost to her sides.

Then the little light that the moon poured down was suddenly reflected in Nahara's eyes. All at once they burned out of the dusk; two blue-green circles of fire fifty feet distant in the darkness. At that Warwick

from harm. She will mix you a magic drink and will strike you with her wand. Then you must rush at her with your sword as though you meant to kill her. She will be afraid and ask you to be her friend. Make her promise never to do you harm at any time."

Hermes vanished, and Odysseus, with the magic herb in his possession, went on to the house of Circe.

The sorceress welcomed him more heartily than she had his men. She made him sit down in a silver chair and she sat on a footstool at his feet. Then she mixed the magic drink for him in a golden cup. When he had drunk this she touched him with her magic wand and said:

"Off to the sty, and lie there with your friends!"

Odysseus drew his sword and rushed at her as if he would kill her. With a cry Circe fell on her knees and said:

"Who are you, strange man?"

Still he threatened her until she promised never to try to work her magic on him again and to change his men back to themselves. Circe promised these things.

Then she commanded her servants to make

gasped for the first time. He had not found the knife.

But at that instant the gasp gave way to a whispered oath of wonder. Some living creature was running lightly down the trail toward him—soft, light feet that came with amazing swiftness. For once in his life Warwick did not know where he stood. He tried to probe into the darkness with his tired eyes.

"Here I am!" he called. The tiger, starting to creep forward once more, halted at the voice. A small, straight figure sped like an arrow out of the thickets and halted at his side.

"Who in the world?" he asked in the vernacular.

"It is I—Little Shikara," a tremulous voice answered. Except for the tremor he could not keep from his tone, he spoke as one man to another.

Warwick knew at once that Little Shikara was not yet aware of the presence of the tiger, fifty feet distant in the shadows. But he knew nothing else. The whole situation was beyond his ken.

But his instincts were manly and true. "Then run speedily, little one," he whispered, "back to the village. There is danger here in the dark."

Little Shikara tried to speak, and he swallowed painfully. A lump had come in his throat that at first would not let him talk. "Nay, Protector of the Poor!" he answered. "I—I came alone. And I—I am thy servant."

Warwick's heart bounded. Not since his youth had left him to a gray world had his strong heart leaped in just this way before. "Merciful God!" he whispered in English. "Has a child come to save me?" Then he whipped again into the vernacular and spoke swiftly, for no further seconds were to be wasted. "Little Shikara, have you ever fired a gun?"

"No, Sahib!"

Odysseus a guest in her house. They gave him fresh clothes and brought him food. Circe had the swine brought in, and with a wave of her wand changed them back into men. They were glad, indeed, to be rescued.

In the mean time the other company which had been left at the ships with Eurylochus feared that their leader had met with the same fate as the men who had been turned into swine. Odysseus went down to the ships himself and told them to come with him to the house of Circe. Eurylochus was fearful, but he and the men had to obey.

When they came to Circe's house they found their comrades sitting at a banquet table. Eurylochus and the men sat down. Odysseus sat at the head of the table with Circe herself.

So for a year Odysseus and his men lived on Circe's island, resting from their weary adventures on the seas. At the end of a year they decided that they would start for their homes again.

Odysseus told Circe that he and his men were going to depart. She helped them get ready and sent them on their way. After several other adventures Odysseus finally reached his own country.

"Then lift it up and rest it across my body. Thou knowest how it is held!"

Little Shikara didn't know exactly, but he pested the gun on Warwick's body, and he had seen enough target practice to crook his finger about the trigger. And together, the strangest pair of hunters that the Indian stars ever looked down upon, they waited.

"IT IS Nahara, and thou art a man," Warwick said again. "And now thou must wait until thou seest her eyes."

So they strained into the darkness, and in an instant more they saw again the two circles of greenish, smoldering fire. They were quite near now—Nahara was almost in leaping range.

"Thou wilt look through the little hole at the rear and then along the barrel," Warwick ordered swiftly, "and thou must see the two eyes along the little notch in front."

"I see, Sahib—and between the eyes," came the same breathless whisper. The little brown body held quite still. Warwick could not even feel it trembling against his own. For the moment, by virtue of some strange prank of Shiv, the jungle gods were giving their own strength to this little brown son of theirs beside the ford.

"Thou wilt not jerk or move?" "Nay, Sahib." And he spoke true. The world might break to pieces or blink out, but he would not throw off his aim by any terror motions. They could see the tiger's outline now—the lithe, low-hung body, the tail that twitched up and down.

"Then pull the trigger," Warwick whispered.

The whole jungle world rocked and trembled from the violence of the report.

WHEN the villagers, aroused by the roar of the rifle and led by Khusru and Juran and Little Shikara's father, rushed down with their firebrands to the ford, their first thought was that they had come only to the presence of the dead. Three human beings lay very still beside the stream, and fifty feet in the shadows something else, that obviously was not a human being, lay very still, too. But they were not to have any such horror story to tell their wives. Only one of the three by the ford, Singhai, the gun-bearer, was even really unconscious. Little Shikara had gone into a half-faint from fear and nervous exhaustion and Warwick Sahib had merely closed his eyes to the darting light of the firebrands. The only death that had occurred was that of Nahara the tigress—and she had a neat hole bored completely through her neck.

The words that Warwick Sahib said, the short vernacular words that have a way of coming straight to the point, established Little Shikara as a legend through all that corner of British India. It was Little Shikara who had come alone through the jungle, said he; it was Little Shikara's shining eyes that had gazed along the barrel, and it was his own brown finger that had pulled the trigger. Thus, said Warwick, he would get the bounty that the British government offered—British rupees that to a child's eyes would be past counting. Thus in time, with Warwick's influence, he would be a great voice through all of India. For small as he was, and not yet grown, he was of the true breed.

After the shouting was done Warwick turned to Little Shikara to see how he thought upon all these things. "Thou shalt have training for the army, little one, where thy good nerve will be of use, and thou shalt be a native officer, along with the sons of princes. I myself will see to it, for I do not hold my life so cheap that I will forget the thing thou hast done to-night."

And he meant what he said. The villagers stood still when they saw his earnest face. "And what, little hawk, wilt thou have more?" he asked.

Little Shikara trembled and raised his eyes. "Only sometimes to ride with thee, in thy howdah, as thy servant, when thou again seekest the tiger."

"I would not dare go without thee now," Warwick told him.

And thus Little Shikara's dreams came true—to be known through many villages as a hunter of tigers and a brave follower and comrade of the forest trails.

## THE HEART OF LITTLE SHIKARA

Continued from page 6

which the rifle seemed to whirl about in his arms, drive to his shoulder and blaze in the deepening twilight. And the shot went true. It pierced the mugger from beneath, tearing upward through the brain. And then the agitated waters of the ford slowly grew quiet.

The last echo of the report was dying when Singhai stretched his bleeding arms about Warwick's body, caught up the rifle and dragged them forty feet up on the shore. It was an effort that cost the last of his strength.

Warwick was the first to regain consciousness. At first he didn't understand the lashing pain in his wrists, the strange numbness in one of his legs, the darkness, with the great white Indian stars shining through. Then he remembered. And he tried to stretch his arm to the prone form beside him.

The attempt was an absolute failure; the muscles refused to react. He turned, wracked with pain, on his side and lifted his left arm. In doing so his hand crossed before his eyes—and then he smiled wanly in the darkness.

It was quite like Warwick, sportsman and English gentleman, to smile at a time like this. Even in the gray darkness of the jungle night he could see the hand quite plainly. It no longer looked slim and white. The mugger had caught his fingers in one of its last rushes.

The fingers were torn, yet their bones did not seem to be severed. Temporarily, however, the hand was utterly useless. The fingers felt strange and detached.

He reached out to the still form beside him, touching the dark skin with the flesh of his wrist. He expected to find it cold. Singhai was alive, however, and his warm blood beat close to the dark skin.

But he was deeply unconscious, and it was possible that one foot was hopelessly mutilated.

FOR a moment Warwick lay quite still. He did not believe that either he or his attendant was mortally or even very seriously hurt. True, one of his arms had suffered paralysis, but there was no reason for thinking it had been permanently injured. His hand would be badly scarred, but soon as good as ever. The real question that faced them was that of getting back to the bungalow.

Then he called into the darkness. A heavy body brushed through the creepers and, stepping falsely, broke a twig. He thought at first that it might be one of the villagers coming to look for him. But at once the step was silenced.

Warwick had a disturbing thought that the creature that had broken the twig had not gone away, but was crouching down, in a curious manner, in the deep shadows. Nahara had returned to her hunting.

### IV

"SOME time I, too, will be a hunter of tigers," Little Shikara told his mother when the beaters began to circle through the bamboos. "To carry a gun beside Warwick Sahib—and to be honored in the circle under the tree!"

But his mother hardly listened. She was quivering with fright. She had seen the last part of the drama in front of the village, and she was too frightened even to notice the curious imperturbability of her little son. But there was no orderly retreat after Little Shikara had heard the two reports of the rifle. At first there were only the shouts of the beaters, singularly high-pitched, much running back and forth in the shadows, and then a peevish scurry to the shelter of the villages.

But there was one among them who was not yet a man grown; a boy so small that he could hover, unnoticed, in the very smallest of the terrible shadow patches. He was Little Shikara, and he was shocked to the depths of his worshipping heart. For Warwick had been his hero, and he felt himself burning with indignation that the beaters should return so soon.

He went up to one of the younger beaters who had told and retold a story of catching a glimpse of Nahara in the thickets until no one was left to tell it to. He was standing

silent, and Little Shikara thought it possible that he might reach his ears.

"Did no one look by the ford?" he asked, almost sobbing. "For that is the place he had gone."

The native's eyes seemed to light. "Hai, little one, thou has thought of what thy elders had forgotten. There is level land there, and clear. And I shall go at the first ray of dawn."

"But not to-night, Khusru?"

"Nay, little sinner! Wouldst thou have me torn to pieces?"

Little Shikara silently left the circle of villagers and turned into the darkness.

At once the jungle silence closed round him. Although he could still see the flame of the fire at the village gate behind him, it was almost as if he had at once dropped off into another world.

Time after time he halted, but always he pushed on a few more feet. Now he was over halfway to the ford, clear to the forks in the trail. And then he turned about with a little gasp of fear.

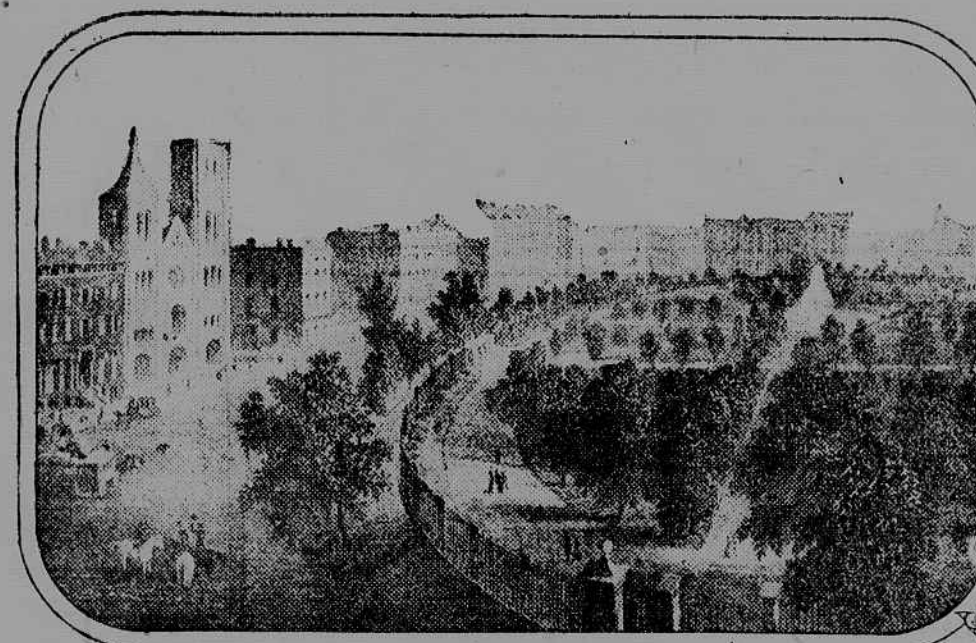
The light from the village had gone out. The thick foliage of the jungle had come between.

He was really frightened now. It wasn't that he was afraid he couldn't get back. The trail was broad and hard and quite gray in the moonlight. But those far-off beams of light had been a solace to his spirit, a reminder that he had not yet broken all ties with the village. He halted, intending to turn back.

Then a thrill began at his scalp and went clear to his bare toes. Faint through the jungle silences he heard Warwick Sahib calling to his faithless beaters. The voice had an unmistakable quality of distress.

THE first few minutes after Warwick had heard a living step in the thickets he spent

## Union Square Is Too Citified To Be a Park



The Square in the days when trees would grow there.

THERE is sometimes a tide in the affairs of cities which transforms what was once a little beauty spot—an oasis of green in the midst of municipal grime—into a field for subway entrances and a camping ground for peddlers.

To the New Yorker of to-day Union Square is little more than an express station on two subway lines. It once was as exclusive as Gramercy Park with its high iron fence, as official as City Hall Park with its parades and revues, as decorative as a formal garden.

One after another of the city's various cen-

ters stopped for a period in the neighborhood of Fourteenth Street and Broadway, only to move on in time to points north. The fashionable residential neighborhood once was next door to Union Square. Daniel Drew and Ogden Goelet had homes on the square. The Spingler Institute, and later the Everett House, were among the imposing buildings that faced its green. The Academy of Music, and the Square Theater, the famous Dime Museum, were the amusement places of the neighborhood.

Although it is evident that the heyday of Union Square is past, it may see better days



The Square that is now but a roof for subways and explosives

than those through which it now is passing. Things really couldn't be much worse for the square, and it still remains a park. Subways running under it have resulted in the loss of many trees. The sod has become overgrown and unkempt from lack of grooming. A mound similar to the cyclone cellars of the Kansas prairie holds guarded position in one section. It is a storehouse for explosives. To add to the unsightly effects, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are surrounded by high board fences and face piles of pipes and tilings.

Things will not always be this way, according to Park Commissioner Gallatin. Improve-

ments have been planned. A bed of tulips in bloom gives a cheery note of promise that things are picking up in Union Square. The sod is being leveled; new trees have been planted and old trees pruned. The largest demonstration garden in the city is being planted. It is to have decorative points as well as practical labels for radishes and spinach. A neat priet hedge will inclose the vegetables and the arched gate to the garden will support vines.

In the old days a deep fountain was built into the middle of the park. It alone of all the old decorations has withstood the trampling and tunneling of the city.